

DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

#15

CELEBRATING OUR FOURTH YEAR
CHAMPIONING THE MUSICALLY JADED

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DISPOSABLE JAPANESE SCENE REPORT

This issue we have our third instalment of this column, which is more a collection of Japanese band reviews than anything else.

Beyond Description *Fine Day Nostalgia 7"* (Forest)

Total punk! A superb EP of fierce, fast Jap-core. There's nice packaging which includes lyrics and live photos, it's well-produced, and even has a live song along with the four studio songs.

Hideyuki Okahara, Ceramica 2 # 301, 1-37 Minami-cho 2-chome, Kokubunji-shi, Tokyo 185, Japan

Beyond Description/Absconded *Japan Meets Holland 7"* (Wicked Witch)

BD's side is killer fast punk. I notice their singer here sounds a little like Sepultura's on the early LP's. Absconded is also punk, but more upbeat Epitaph pop-punk style, with quite melodic vocals. A well-produced EP featuring lyrics.

PO Box 3835, 1001 AP Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Faces of Destrudo reh/demo '95

They've given it the old college try, I have to say that. It kinda sounds like newer Mortician. I don't mean that in a bad way seeing as I hate Mortician, but it's got that stripped down, simplistic deathy thing going on. Let's see where it goes next time.

\$3 to Chie Kamiyama, 1-14-7 Wakamatsu, Sagamihara Kanagua 229, Japan

Transgressor *Ether for Scapegoat*

I don't know who put this out, but it's an amazing death metal debut CD featuring the classic demo tracks and newer, more doomy songs, with very unusual arrangements and keyboards, piling riff upon riff, dissonance, different styles creeping in, et cetera!

PO Box 51, Eureka IL 61530

Vivisection/Genocide SS 7" (Blurred)

Vivisection is total grinding punk with some deathy touches. These Japs have a rough sound and four vocal lines, plus a Napalm Death cover included. Genocide SS is also enjoyable and is quite obnoxious, and they're from Sweden. Go ahead!

482-1 Naka, Kambura Ihara, Shizuoka 421-32, Japan

DISPOSABLE OPINIONS

In Defense of Some Unwise Mouth Grime

by Relapse Stormtrooper Jeff Wagner

So I was on the phone recently with this zine's humble editor, Richard, and as usual we were discussing various label affairs. In the course of our conversation we got on the topic of the tiny pockets of anti-Relapse complainers that I come across from time to time. Basically, as the e.mail reader/responder and the publicity guy, I seem to encounter the complaints people have about our label sometimes, and find myself having to correct people's misconceptions occasionally. Normally, you expect this kind of thing, and if any anybody had a really good reason why we suck, I'd just be humble and not make it an issue. However, I haven't had proof of one good argument yet as to why Relapse sucks. Richard, knowing what this company's all about, insisted that he give me a chance to refute some of these ridiculous claims in this very zine. Though I'm reluctant to spend a lot of time defending this company (I'd rather work toward its progress), I accepted. Hopefully, there are some of those detractors out there reading this. As for the thousands of people who faithfully support this label (and the entire metal underworld) and consistently use our mail order service, and listen to bands on the Relapse and Nuclear Blast America roster: thank you, and skip over this rant; this is not directed at you.

Before I get into it, Richard wanted me to introduce myself to readers unfamiliar with my present (and past) activities, so as to give you a clue as to where I'm coming from and how I got here. I'll keep it simple and as brief as possible.

I'm a 26 year old freakus with an almost unhealthy obsession with King Krimson and Voivod. I've been a devotee of metal since I first latched onto Kiss at age 7. I've played in bands who recorded demos and played across the Midwest. I DJ'ed 2½ years of a metal specialty show at University of Iowa's KRUI, during which time I began writing for any zine that would take my contributions. I began my own zine called *Symposium* in late '92, and am

currently working on the 7th issue. In late '94 I was given the opportunity to join the Relapse cult (which is basically what we are in this rather lame town) as the "national publicity director," a fancy name for the guy who communicates with zines, magazines, and other publications, as well as handling several other duties.

My life is music, music is my life. It's such a large part of my daily existence that I would never align myself with an organization that would do anything to rip off the scene, or just make a mockery of the metal underground. That's why I'm at Relapse: I believe in this company's goals and ideas, and only see its progress as an overwhelming positive for not only the label, but for the entire metal community as a whole.

Now, to address five of the most frequent complaints I've heard concerning Relapse as a label and mail order service; again, this is for the scattered few who feel they've been wronged by the label's growth from a small two-man hobby to a major force in the 90's metal community, rather than to the thousands who continue to support and believe in this organization.

1) "Relapse is a rip-off"

Okay, that's pretty ambiguous, but I've heard it stated, and can only guess that this has been uttered for two reasons: a) I get a finite amount of promotional materials (we are an independent, y'know) and I sometimes have to refuse service to various zines, based on circulation, content, and general attitude. The bottom line is, if your zine isn't being serviced, it's due to one of three things: the circulation doesn't justify servicing, the magazine isn't interested in our open-minded stance on music and life in general, and/or it's just a crappy, poor excuse for a zine. If I don't service your zine with "free stuff," it's not a personal thing, but a decision I have to make, as I have to make our promotional tools stretch as far as I can. b) Certain bands and small labels have complained that they haven't gotten paid for consignment items, when the truth is that their stuff hasn't sold one damned unit, and we're just keeping them on our shelves in hopes that even one or

two items sell. If they don't sell, don't blame us. We've done our part by including it in the catalog and offering it to our customers. Maybe if the bands or labels did some promotion, someone out there with money to spend would be aware that it exists. Call us, talk to our accountant, we're not hiding anything. Just be a little more assertive with your product. We've got our own label and bands to push without worrying that there are 50 Disintegration demos collecting copious amounts of dust on our shelves.

2) "Relapse is betraying the underground by taking ads out in *Rip*..."

...and *Metal Maniacs*, and *S.O.D.*, and *Pit*, and *Ill Literature*, and *Sepulchral Voice*, and *Alternative Press*, and *Industrial Nation*, etc. What we're doing is covering all the bases. Just because we advertise in stuff like *Rip* doesn't necessarily mean we agree with the bands they choose to cover. What we're doing is attempting to sway all the alterna-wankers who worship that magazine our way: "Hey, you in the Civ shirt, if you thought Weezer was heavy, wait 'til you hear Mortician!" It can be done.

3) "Relapse charges too much money for stuff in their catalog"

Someone recently had the audacity to claim that we bought our CD's for \$6 wholesale, and therefore are blindly ripping people off. I don't recall ever having seen this person around the office, doing the ordering for our catalog, but I'm so blinded by greed that I probably just didn't see him yet. Sarcasm aside, some prices for which we sell CD's, i.e. \$18 - \$30, are merely reflections of what we buy them for, and let's just say that we don't get the best prices on some of these imported, rare, hard-to-find CD's. Remember that postage is built into the prices, as we do not charge an additional penny for postage on orders anywhere within the States. If this seems facetious, spend your money at a much more "trustworthy", "honest" mail order service, say, Wild Rags.

4) "the Casey Keraminas credit scam"

If you're reading this, Casey, this is not a per-

sonal attack, but a genuinely truthful reaction to your conspiracy theory in *Metal Core* #20 (by the way, if we owe you money, why haven't you bothered to call our accountant as I suggested?): Casey claims that Relapse pulls this scam that we put non-existent items in our catalog just to look "cool" and entice people into buying them, only to send them credit slips. Yes, we send credit slips. No, we never put items in our catalog that we cannot get or do not carry. Do you realize the trouble we'd be getting into if we did something that idiotic?

This is where the myth comes from: a customer calls up and inquires about the availability of a particular item. If it's in stock, we tell the customer we have the item, and the customer then sends an order in. A week later, we receive the order and process it. By this time, the item in question has sold out. If no alternates are listed, a credit slip is issued. It's simple, quite fair, rather innocent, and not quite the evil, greedy conspiracy it's been made out to be. The quick disappearance of certain items happens most often with rare, hard-to-find, in-demand items like for example the Morbid/Mayhem split LP-CD, the Old Lady Drivers LP, Xysma's *First and Magical*, and many others.

5) "Relapse is only in it for the money; they're commercializing grindcore and death metal"

It infuriates me to think that there are people out there ignorant enough to believe that this label began with the intention of making tons of cash! Matt and Bill didn't sign bands like Mortician, Incantation, Rottrevore, or Deceased to make a gold mine; you do it purely out of love for extreme death metal. The label has definitely expanded to include, dare I say it, more "accessible" (i.e. not as punishingly extreme) bands like Amorphis and Mindrot, but there again, these bands were only taken on because Matt and Bill believe in the music, not the money. Matt and Bill would certainly keep themselves immersed in music of extreme varieties should Relapse crumble tomorrow; we're all fans above and beyond anything else. Real extreme fans should be thankful that we're

(cont'd after concert reviews)

DISPOSABLE CONCERT REVIEWS

**Extreme Noise Terror,
Grief, and Aus Rotten**
the Loft, Baltimore, MD
by Pellethead

Smack dab in the poverty stricken, crack riddled, "watch your back" paranoia of the sweltering Baltimore hood hangs a pack of the present age retro-punk impostors that reek of almost everything the true form is against. Yet there is hope -- the bare properties of crust punk/grindcore, angst, frustration, chosen alienation from the pig majority, honesty, and gut desire has preserved through one of the form's founders. Yes, a decade after their formation, Extreme Noise Terror have landed on U.S. shores for the first time! No, not as some financially successful godfather band going through the motions with empty emotion, but in their primal form, spewing off the same aura of raging conviction as in their mid-eighties Gism, Discharge, Anit-Cimex influenced beginnings.

The event was kicked off by Pittsburgh's Aus Rotten, who warmed up the crowd with a dose of snot-nosed classic punk. Up for the finale (?) was the severely sedated Grief. By their second slo-mo ditty all but maybe three of the adrenaline drunk punks had left the building. It's not that this band totally sucks; they're just too damn boring for the general unvaliumed populous. They do play what they play well, especially the painful, wretched vocals, but it's just not enough to keep anyone's attention. How ironic was this bill? Three members of the ultra-godly ENT worshipping Disrupt make up this super-slow, depressive doom ensemble! Grief simply blew off the lack of crowd interest

as a badly mismatched bill (punk vs metal). I think they should've stayed in Disrupt (sorry, guys).

Playing a sweaty, graffitied, dirt floored squat (in true crust fashion), a middle-aged ENT showed the new wave of crusties exactly how the rancid seeds of grindcore had sprouted.

Opening with a new song in the old fashion entitled "Jesus On My Side," the more than legendary and often copied low-end/high screeching growl vocalizing tag team of Dean "constant butt-smoker" Jones and Phil "dread head" Vane tore through the hot stagnant air like a shotgun hit of car exhaust. The extremely tight six-member band sped through most of their classic *Retro-bution* tracks, including "Work for Never," "Bullshit Propaganda," "Murder," and "Lame Brain," as their obvious influence on the whole crust/grind scene, past and present, was never more evident.

Guitarist/songwriter Pete Hurley, new member/bassist Lee Barrett, Ali Firousbuknt on lead, and drummer Pig Killer (who has since left to be replaced by Cradle of Filth's old drummer) pounded through one of the most angry, adrenaline soaked displays of power with youthful aggression and precision I've seen. The crowd was freaked!

After Phil called the "crust heads" on their puzzling desire for a rock 'n' roll encore, the band paid tribute to one of their aforementioned influences by slamming forth a Discharge cover.

The long ten year wait was well worth it. Let's hope one of the true fathers of the genre finds the success they deserve -- and another U.S. tour -- soon!

(opinions cont'd)

sticking to our guns and not just signing bands according to the trends, as many independent labels around us have done. The fact that Relapse is good at getting our stuff out to the masses has nothing to do with us being "commercial." Just by having a UPC code on a product makes it, by definition, "commercial." If our detractors were to throw out everything

they own with a "commercial" UPC code on it, they'd own nothing and eat even less.

Thanks to Richard for letting me spew on behalf of Relapse. No apology to those who just didn't grasp the *Corporate Death* satire. The unkind mind grind rolls on...

Human Remains from New Jersey is one of the most completely sick, innovative, and over the top bands I have ever heard. While the future of the band remains uncertain, I'm printing this interview anyway. At least we can savor the '91 demo, the Admirations Most Deep and Foul 7" on the Dutch Cenotaph Records, and the various compilation tracks for a long time to come. Human Remains c/o Dave Witte, 5 Larsen Ln, Hazlet NJ 07730. Below Dave, the drummer, answered a few questions.

D.U.: Part of your trademark sound is the bizarre guitar riffings. I've seen you play live and I still can't tell how the guitarists pull them off. Where do you guys get this shit?

Dave: Steve is responsible for most of our music. His emotions play a big part in his writing. You have to feel it for it to work. It's not just riffs. A riff is a riff and nothing else. Drugs and alcohol aren't what fuels him; he just looks inside himself.

I've never heard the bass that high in the mix on your recordings. Do you treat it as simply there to "lay down the rhythm"?

Ah, bass! While we're on the topic, we have a new bass player, Will Carl Black. Before, the bass was just a rhythm section. Not now, though. The bass is now another weapon for originality.

How is it going with filling in for Exit-13?

I'm very excited to do it. I think it's a lot of fun, and some crazy music is being played.

You were going to do an LP on Cenotaph, so briefly tell why that didn't happen.

Basically, they sent us a shitty contract that only a moron would sign, and when we sent it back with all the changes, we never heard from him again. It's a shame. Adwin was a nice guy. Oh well!

In a nutshell, how and why did you all get together?

We first started out wanting to be total death metal, and over the years we've expanded our music into other categories.

Where do you want to go with the band?

Hopefully we will create a new category. We will always be metal in some way, but not your typical way. We want to re-create and inspire music.



We will not stand in the category line and rot away. It's time to take the next step and move on to the next plane of music.

Last comments?

Our debut CD, *Using Sickness as a Hero*, will be out sometime on Relpase Records. Also we have shirts and hats. Write for info and send return postage. Thanks for the interview. Later.



DISPOSABLE MUSIC REVIEWS

Remember when you could buy an album and have a pretty good idea about the quality and what it would sound like based on what label put it out? Well, this issue I've grouped all the reviews by label, except when a label has less than three records reviewed herein. That way we have a microcosm of what each label is vibing on lately. Yes, it's the "let's get banned from all the mailing lists" issue. The less-than-three labels and the independent releases are below, followed by the label groupings.

All About Chad *I Know a Girl* (Big Pop)

An unassuming alerno-rock ditty that's taken from the band's LP, plus a non-LP cover. The vocal keys are a bit unusual, I must admit, sort of in the whiny Pumpkins style. Good stuff.

Blinker the Star '95 album (Treat and Release/Vibra Cobra)

That wacky Canadian, Jordan, has put out a one-man project done on an 8-track. I know how that sounds, but it's actually not too bad. It's kind of Sonic Youth-ish but without the noise element.

Deceased '95 demo #2

These four tunes will appear on the death metal band's next full-length. What can I say? Amazing double-leads, long songs packed full of tons of classic-sounding old metal riffings with a modern feel and cohesiveness, good sound. I'm impressed as usual.

Dessau '95 album (Mausoleum)

A CD retrospective of this industrial dance band, some of this release is like ten years old, so it sounds really old school of course. There's a Ministry influence on some of the songs with which those guys were involved. So-so.

Drill '96 album (A&M)

A new band with a fetish for vocal effects, Drill's singer can be passionate and the bass player has a flair to him, but the album is fairly mellow and only a couple songs have a really

good hook. Overall kinda dull.

Go Kart/Sound Views compilation *Step on a Crack Vol. 2*

A self-styled New York subterranean music comp., with varying styles of underground bands featured. There's some good bands, such as the Wives, Deadguy, Iabhorher, 13, the Devil Dogs, etc. A really good comp. of some diverse, killer bands!

Go Kart, PO Box 20, Prince St Station, New York NY 10012

Homicide *Self-determined Breed*

These crazy fuckers from Italy are back with yet another demo. This time there's a new-Sepultura style intro, followed by surprisingly sub-par production. I don't hear any improved musicianship, but the music is more varied and mid-paced.

\$6 to Massy Allegretti, Viale Matteotti 340, 20099 Sesto S, Giovanni Milano, Italy

Humungous Fungus *Low-Key Poetry* (Noise)

This LP sounds like a cross between the Chili Peppers and another really stupid band. A bunch of white boys playing funky groove metal with rap-style delivery sits with me as well as would a carton of spoiled milk. Whoever signed these guys should be shot.

Kalisia *Skies*

An unbelievable demo of progressive death, with influences from the likes of Iron Maiden, King Diamond, and maybe The Gathering. Philosophical lyrics, long, emotive songs, along with incredible musicianship and top-rate packaging and production! The best!

\$7 Europe, \$8 elsewhere to Brett Caldas-Lima, 781 Av. M. Teste, Terrasses du Peyrou B3, 34070 Montpellier, France

Kreator *Cause for Conflict* (Noise)

I dunno. I can appreciate the new line-up's efforts, but I can't get into the lyrics and thinner music as much as the previous material. It's not quite the same without Rob and Vantor. It has in a way an 80's metal sound, and is more thrashy than *Renewal*.

Medusa Oblongada '94 EP (Megalithic)

The ex-Viogression boys have gone in a new direction, with drum machine, acoustic drums, and a sort of industrial metal sound, but a little more weird, what with the pseudo-funky bass and atypical crunch riffs.

Melting Hopefuls *Viva la Void* (Big Pop)

A quite catchy alternative band. Pleasant vocals, tasty distorted bass, recorded live in the studio. In the same vein as some bands you may have heard, but still fresh and exciting. This EP rules!

Nailbomb *Proud to Commit Commercial Suicide* (Roadrunner)

A live album from the Dynamo in Holland, with a few songs not on the studio album, including some covers. It's cool. It's rad. It's now!

Nile *Festivals of Atonement*

OK, here's some deathy type metal, with an interesting feel: doomy slow parts a la new Hypocrisy, heavy fast parts, with lyrics about ancient Egyptian-type pagan religions. A thoughtful angle, with imaginative ethnic instrumentation and punishing guitars.

Pete Hammoura, PO Box 6062, Greenville SC 29606-6062

Obey Bizar *Breakthrough*

Another dose of velteta thrash I don't need. I've had enough Kraft core to last me a lifetime already, so the slightest hint of margarine metal sends me reeling.

\$4 to 6205 Freedom Dr, Charlotte NC 28214

Oracular Disander *As the Willow...* (Heller)

Let's see ... some textured progressive metal with deathy influences, i.e. the vocals, and a lot of reverb. Sounds like a young band that's getting it together; you can hear that early enthusiasm. With more experience these guys could go far.

Heller, 20115 Amirim, Upper Galile, Israel

Replicants '95 album (Zoo)

This is totally rad! A side project cover album

featuring the likes of Cars, Pink Floyd, David Bowie, and Beatles songs.

Sarina Simoon *Sarina Won*

Basically a one-woman project with some help from the drummer from Ugly and a few bass players. It's got some really terrible melodies and a pseudo-artsy approach to try to make up for it. Laughable!

Village Station PO Box 644, New York NY 10014-0644

Self *Subliminal Plastic Motives* (Spongebath/Zoo)

Hook-oriented alterno-rock with tons of sampled noises threaded through the music. A shame that one of the weakest tracks on the album was released as a single. This band owes a lot to Veruca Salt.

Sepultura *Roots* (Roadrunner)

Surprisingly enough, the relocated to the American southwest Sepultura has recorded a good album, although they owe a LOT to Neurosis. Very repetitive, very slow to mid-paced, very downtuned. The tribal drums and distorted vocals are all there.

(note: comparisons in other reviews to "new Sepultura" refer to Chaos A.D.)

The Offspring '89 album (Nitro/Epitaph)

Financially speaking, now is a good time to re-release an old Offspring album. I guess it was out of print until now and the demand was there. Somehow, with all of Offspring's new MTV fans who think they only have one album, I doubt it.

Ugly *Negotiations in the Smith Room* (Victrola)

Total god! Sort of ska sometimes, sort of punky sometimes, plenty of energy, and plenty of conga drums. This is a varied album, and a good listen. A great live band as well!

PO Box 3104, Merrifield VA 22116

Unholy *Abused* (Massproduction)

A raw, metallic sound, with some pounding grooves, old metal touches, and intelligent, socially conscious lyrics. What annoys me

about this four song EP is the New York tough guy rap metal influences these Swedes have added in there.

\$8 to PO Box 377, S-851 06 Sundsvall, Sweden

Voivod *Negatron* (Mausoleum/Hypnotic)

I am very happy to hear the new Voivod. Their demos for this album had a different approach and a different line-up, and how it all turned out in the end is an improvement. Sort of a cross between *Dimension Hatröss* and *Killing Technology*. Simply amazing!!

Voodoo Glow Skulls *Firme* (Epitaph)

Hell yeah, I could do with a ska injection about now. These dudes are just as good as the Toasters. Fast, loud, punky ass shit here. Just in time for MTV to exploit the genre, too. Really good lyrics as well, mostly dealing with inebriation. Get it!

Wicked Disc Records compilation *This is Boston, Not L.A./Unsafe at Any Speed*

Containing both the comp. LP and EP respectively, released on vinyl originally in '82, the CD features tracks and lyrics from Gang Green, Groinoids, the F.U.s, the Freeze, the Proletariat, and Jerry's Kids. I love it! This is classic! 38 Everett St, Allston MA 02134

The label groupings begin here.

Century Media

Hostility *Brick*

A groove metal band! I never would have guessed! Boy, they sure are taking a big risk signing an act like this in today's market. What an original, artistic move for a record label to make. My faith in the industry to put music before profit is maintained.

Merauder *Master Killer*

Just what I needed, another stupid tough-guy New York hardcore groove metal band that's been listening to too much Biohazard and Life of Agony. I'd like to hear a signed band that isn't from New York for once.

My Own Victim *Burning Inside*

Just when I thought today's music couldn't get any worse, I got another package in the mail from Century Media. Taking all the worst elements of the current funky tough guy groove metal trend, My Own Victim excels at mediocrity. 'Nuff said, I guess.

Only Living Witness *Innocents*

I'm not sure where these guys are coming from, but it's got an alternative rock edge to it, and a modern heavy metal edge as well. It's okay if you're into Siverchair and Soundgarden and so on.

Trouble *Plastic Green Head*

Them ganja-smokin', thrift shop clothes wear-in', walrus mustache havin', doom rockin' mu-thafuckas are back with a new LP, with Beatles and Monkees covers included, no less. Cool!

Displeased

Celestial Season *Celestial Season's Sonic Orb*

If I wanna hear Cathedral, I'll listen to fuckin' Cathedral. I'm kind of disappointed with C.S.'s newer direction. I liked their old singer and depressive doom better, and this whole alternative retro-doom rock trip everyone is on gets old after a while.

Eternal Solstice *Horrible Within*

Some good old fashioned crunchy Dutch death metal! Some mid-paced stuff and some upbeat stuff here. I think some contemporary influences have crept in there, considering they only formed in 1989. This is their second album.

Hybernoid *Todays Tomorrows Yesterday*

If you can imagine a more upbeat, metallic Cure, this is kind of what that would sound like. Growly/mellow vocals and plenty of clean guitar riffs, plus more avant-garde rock and techno-dance with weird noises makes this a very emotional listen.

Earache

At the Gates *Slaughter of the Soul*

I used to be against this band using a violin player in the past, but now I think it was a distinction needed in today's scene. This LP sounds too much like old Dismember (even the production is Sunlight-ish) but it's still an incredible Swedish record!!

Old Formula

It's kind of progressive, it's kind of new wave, it's very experimental and mellow, with lots of vocal and guitar loops. It reminds me of new Pestilence and older Pink Floyd. If you want weird, you got it!!

Scorn Gyal

Sans Nick Bullen, sans vocals, and sans bass and guitar, this album is a very stripped down and minimalistic slab o' wax. I'd say the remix LP they did had a big effect on the Human Tornado. It's good, but I liked *Evanescence* better.

Ultraviolence Psycho Drama

I lapsed into a coma whilst trying to listen to this. Whoever arranged this LP has the attention span of a Mayfly. The accompanying concept synopsis to the album is 1,000 times more enjoyable than the album itself. Utter crap techno crap.

Godhead

Acrimony *The Acid Elephant E.P.* I'm starting to get bored with all this 70's doom stuff, all these seemingly retro "tribute to the genre" bands. I mean, it's cool and all, but some fresh ideas and less rehash would be better. Less pot and more thought would help this band.

Mourning Sign '95 album

I was really surprised to hear this Swedish LP. M.S. has thrown out most of its influences and gone for a death grind approach. They went for a serious blast on this record, as at the same time ideas from the last LP creep in there at unexpected times.

Paul Chain *Alkahest*

The man that's been recording doom vinyl since

'83, Paul Chain from Italy is back with a new full-length, and a ton of people such as Lee Dorrian are guest performing on it. More crunchy and darker than your usual doom. The traditional lyrics are good, too.

Holy

Godsend *In the Electric Mist*

Well, what we got here is some Norwegian doom. Don't let that mislead you, 'cause it's more bluesy doom, like Lynard Skynard or Led Zeppelin doom. Very soft acoustic songs with sometimes more traditional doomrock stuff appear here.

Misanthrope 1666 ... *Theatre Bizarre*

A strange sorta concept LP, on which these Frenchies know how to mix it up with renaissance strings, French style thrashy parts, keyboards, and even lyrics in three different languages. Very avant-garde and very weird.

Nightfall *Athenian Echoes*

These Greeks have undergone a huge change. They're totally grindy now, and when they're slow they're still very metal sounding. They have the same problem that Septic Flesh had earlier on, and that is they need to be a *lot* more creative with the drum machine.

Metal Blade

Celestial Season *Solar Lovers*

Just make sure there are no razors around when you spin this disk. I'm happy/sad to receive this re-release of the Dutch band's first LP, complete with doomy songs, violins, acoustic guitars, and low vocals. Great!

Crisis *Deathshead Extermination* Wow, Metal Blade actually signed a good band for once, the best since Mercyful Fate's comeback. Kinda Neurosisish slow grooves, but in a good way, and mid-paced more punkiness, with emotional lyrics and a hard-edged, in-your-face approach. Impressive!

thOught industry *Outer space is just a martini*

away

the gOds of weird rOck are back! it sOunds as thOUGH they've taken a pill and calmed dOWN On this release, as with each sOng having a more singular directiOn, but each One is still bizarre.

None of the Above

Body Clock *Grip Life*

I think Moriarty should concentrate his efforts on Controlled Bleeding and Skin Chamber stuff and steer away from mediocre solo projects like this one. There are some good tracks, like the mellow "Pensive World" and "Servitude," but they are the exception.

Dystopia1 *Go to Hell*

I'd say it's old Pink Floyd meets hokey new wave simple pop from the 80's. It's only vocals, keys, bass, and drums. Lots of weird effects, samples, and so on are thrown in as well. Some songs are "Death at the Playground," "Dead Bug Cemetary," and "Kill a Clown."

Terminal Sect *thehumansconditioned*

Think back to Ministry before they went "industrial". The material has a religious overtone, as a lot of this style does at times, and isn't aggressive enough to go nuts to, and isn't dancy enough to go nuts to, but it's okay to hang out and listen to.

Pavement

Beyond *Reassemble*

Sounds like a cross between new Sepultura and Fear Factory. A shame really, and an ex-member of Sindrome in the band can't help matters. The sampled drums and noise add to the cheesiness of this record. Bland.

Carbonized *Disharmonization*

A stateside release of Lars from Entombed's other band's first LP. They've come a long way since the 7" days, let me tell you. Totally eclectic weirdo metal, with a rhythm section that's only there for the guitarist to wank over,

but it rules!

Malevolent Creation update. The Florida-based band has a new album out which I was initially getting into until I heard racial epithets on one of the tracks, which were left out of the lyric sheet. This totally ruined the LP for me, and changed my opinion of the band for the worse. According to a source close to the band, they only did this to "piss people off," and if so, they succeeded in my case. Fuck this shit.

The Gathering *Always...*

I am totally chuffed to have this LP, originally released on Foundation 2000. The band is one of the few that has a metal sound mixed with lilting vocals and atmospheric keyboards, and pulls it off well. This first LP from The Gathering is a must!

Relapse/Release/Nuclear Blast/NBA

Brutality *When the Sky Turns Black* (Nuclear Blast)

Top notch musicianship on this newest LP from the band, known for its technical, aggressive sound. Adding the acoustic interludes makes it all the more boss, plus a cover of "Electric Funeral".

Dead World *This Will Hurt Someone* (Release)
Lovely. This EP has some choice cuts of monotonous semi-industrial dub-type stuff, and more metallic stuff, which I've grown to like of late.

Love Like Blood *An Irony of Fate* (Release)

Well! Very nice. Sort of a German progressive radio-friendly metal band, like a cross between new Mindrot, the Cure, and Queensrÿche.

Malformed Earthborn *Defiance of the Ugly by the Merely Repulsive* (Release)

Featuring Brutal Truth and Napalm Death members, this is a weird electronic noise/industrial dance CD that was done on an 8-track. It's totally bizarre and has only two songs that I like, the ones that I've heard a few times before

checking out the CD.

Merzbow *Venereology* (Release)

Four songs, one of which is live, in fifty minutes. Who is this Masami Akita anyway? He needs help. It's time to switch the medication. Totally fucking insane electronic noise from one of the best units in the genre.

Mortician *House by the Cemetery* (Relapse)

A CD with the boring 7" of the same name and five more terribly wimpy songs. Not only have they the audacity to release three more limp-dick tracks, but in their own pathetic way they "covered" Celtic Frost and Napalm Death tunes. Mortician fans will love it.

Pyogenesis *Waves of Erotasia* (NBA)

You know those bands where you like some of the songs but not all of them? Well, I like this EP but I don't get into all the band's material. It sounds like European post-death metal with some atmospheric doom touches, a la Celestial Season for example.

Pyogenesis *Twinalblood* (Nuclear Blast)

What the fuck? These guys have totally gone alternative heavy rock! Weird, but cool. This is a CD-single of tracks from the new LP of the same name.

Relapse Records soundtrack compilation *Traces of Death III: Dead and Buried*

Well, there's a bunch of Relapse and Release bands here, so if you're into that sound, go ahead.

The Abyss *The Other Side* (Nuclear Blast)

Since Hypocrisy went dreamy-metal, the guy from that band started another one to get his grind out. This is better black-ish metal than Hypocrisy ever was, and more in the "traditional" vein as well.

Victory

Bloodlet *Eclectic*

A compilation of the band's four 7"es, *Eclectic* features slow, moody hardcore from Florida with some cool like that riff ideas in places. The production varies a bit, but it's all good.

Cause for Alarm/Warzone split EP

It's shameful for me to admit, but this is the first time I've heard these bands. They rule, though. Punchy, upbeat hardcore, short and to the point songs, verse/chorus style, with good lyrics, except for the Krishna stuff.

Deadguy *Fixation on a Coworker*

The title could be about me! How uncanny. Anyway, featuring talented members of the underground hardcore scene, this LP kicks much ass, even more so than the 7". Plenty of pulverizing, weird riffs and agonized vocals, and with a metallic edge. Killer!

Guilt *Bardstown Ugly Box*

Wow, this band has some very intelligent, quasi-philosophical lyrics that I can almost kind of relate to. Actually, this band has a great, atypical hardcore sound, what with the slow emotional stuff and the mid-paced stuff.



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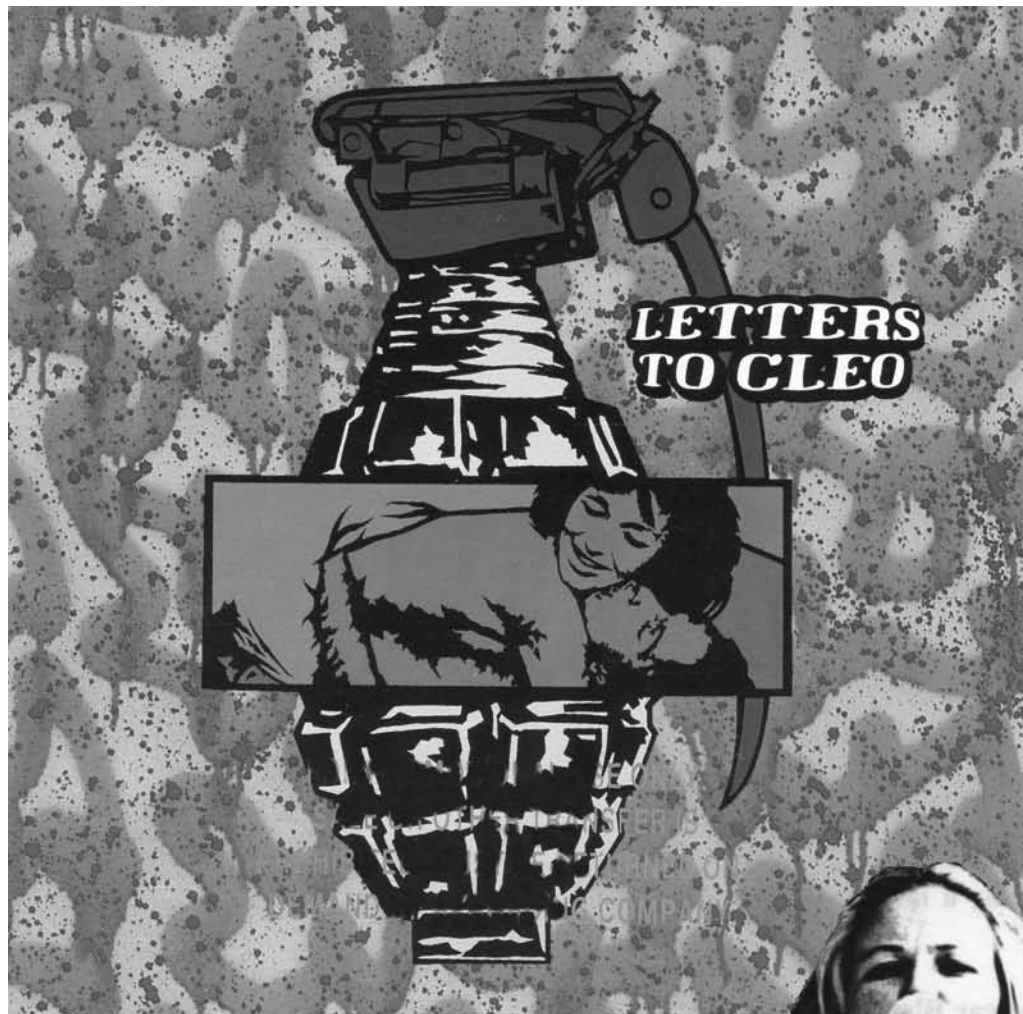
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Here's an interview with *Letters to Cleo* from Boston, an alterno-rock band that, if I can say this, is an alternative to the slew of corporate rock bands saturating the airwaves. Greg, the rhythm guitarist, answered a few questions at a gig of theirs in D.C., starting with getting acquainted.

D.U.: Just to give you an idea of where I'm coming from, as with most people, the first time I heard the band was from the--

Greg: *Melrose Place* [soundtrack].

You knew what I was gonna say. Then I ac-

tually saw the video for "Here and Now" [the song featured on the soundtrack] a couple times on tv, and picked up the album. So did you get most of your fans from that angle, or are you picking up people from the radio and shit like that?

When we went on tour last spring, which was when this whole thing was happening, we got a lot of fans. Most of the fans there were from that angle of being on *Melrose Place*, and we had a lot of the curiosity factor. Y'know, they'd come out to see you once, and they'd either like you, and bought the album and liked the whole thing, or, y'know ... the past couple tours, we didn't really get too many people who only knew us from "Here and Now".

The way I reviewed the *Aurora Gory Alice* LP in my magazine was, you know the Veruca Salt record, *American Thighs*? You know how the single, "Seether," is an old song of theirs that they re-recorded for the album, and so if you





Letters to Cleo
full tilt in DC

Yeah, we paid for *Aurora Gory Alice*, we had to record it and mix it in seven days, which is like unbelievably fast. We spent a month and a half, two months on this new album. We took our time, we tried to grow in the studio. [Before] we were unable to record a song the way we thought it should be recorded because we didn't have the time, we didn't have the money. Now we had the time and money, and we tried to finish each song as its own entity: y'know, different drums, different bass, different sounds, all sorts of things.

Have you heard those kinds of comments we discussed earlier from people when they talk about the album?

Yeah, we've heard many different comments. One of them, y'know, you have people who, when we were an independent band, were very supportive, saying it was a brilliant album and stuff. Now that we're on a major label, even though I think the new album is stronger than the old one, they're slamming it all over the place, because they don't want to see that, yes, each song is a little different style of its own. They just take it as a whole collective and just trash it. And then we've had many more

buy the album based on the single, the album doesn't sound like that at all? I felt the "Here and Now" single had more energy and stood out more and wasn't consistent with the rest of the record.

That would probably've fit in better with *Wholesale Meats and Fish* [the new album], 'cause *Aurora Gory Alice* tended to be a sort of a depressing pop album. We thought it was a very down album; it's sort of subdued, as opposed to the new album. We weren't exactly the happiest of campers when we did *Aurora Gory Alice*. There was problems in the band, and now we've fixed them. Now we're just having a blast.

"Here and Now," I don't know how that made it ... actually, um, it was out of our mood that we chose those songs that we wanted to be on *Aurora Gory Alice*. We had ones that were more in the vein of "Here and Now," but we didn't want to put them on the album. Like I said, we were in a little more mellower mood, and a little more depressed, and that showed on the album.

So when you did the next LP, did you want to do something different than the last LP? Or maybe, when you did the first album, you looked back on it and said, "That's something I want to change on the next album"?

positive reviewers who were able to understand what we were trying to do.

I guess you get tired of people coming at you with these things all the time, and you're like, "Look, you don't know what we're trying to do here."

Well, we try to leave everything open to interpretation. We just want people to get out of the songs what they want to get. People are gonna do what they wanna do. You're never gonna make everybody happy. We don't; we just try to make everybody in the band happy.

When you're doing an interview, can you tell when they've just read the bio and written the interview from that?

It's really pretty blatant. You can tell when people haven't given it a listen. You can also tell that people were assigned this, so they do the bare minimum, and you sort of try to help them get through it. Hopefully at the end of the interview, they'll become interested enough that they'll try to listen to it.

Was doing that 7" before the debut album the first time you went in the studio, or did you have any demos?

Yeah, we've done demos before. We did one song for a local compilation album, and then we did a six song demo at Fort Apache in Boston, and that was it. When we did the 7", that was the first time we worked with a [professional] producer.



Tell me where you'd be without MTV playing your videos.

I think very well, because the radio is playing it a lot, so that, more than anything, forced MTV to put it in rotation. Now if radio didn't play it, we'd be in the exact same spot we were in a year ago. If you get a lot of radio or a lot of MTV, either one can really push your band, to where you can eat regularly on tour.

Closing comments?

It's pretty much a vacant spot up in my brain right now. Um, if you like what you hear, buy it, please, 'cause we need the money. Come out and see us 'cause we're very lonely people. It's like, you can only talk to eight people for so long before you've talked about everything. Y'know, hopefully they'll like what we're doing.

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